What Causes Stimming and Hand Flapping in Autistic Children?

Repetitive movements are common in children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Known as stimming, the extent of these movements may vary depending on the child. It's important for families to understand the underlying cause of this behavior.

What Is Stimming?

Stimming consists of the repetitive movements or sounds children with autism make.

These movements may include:

- **Flapping the hands**
- **Running or rocking back and forth**
- **Spinning around in circles**
- **Posturing (for example, arching the back while seated)**
- **Repeatedly opening and closing doors (or turning the lights on and off)**
- **Chewing on objects**
- **Lining up toys**

Sometimes stimming involves visual or auditory stimulation, including verbal tics. Many children with autism will look sideways, closely observe a spinning object, or flutter their fingers near the eyes. Others will listen to the same song—or make the same noise—over and over again.

Read more about it and about the best treatment for autism in the world.